JWS Curriculum : COMMUNICATION AND INTERACTION

Underpinning all learning in Communication and Interaction is the development of functional communication skills and the application of these for lifelong learning which is informed by our Core Principles:

Safety	**L**earning	**I**ndependence	**C**ommunication	**E**ngagement

SAFETY:

Interacting and communicating is vital for our vulnerable learners to stay safe in society. Expressing likes/dislikes and feelings is important for our pupils in order for their needs to be met, which develops into keeping them safe and enabling them to express worries/disclose and discuss incidents that happen in their lives.

LEARNING:

Communicating is vital to aspects of learning for pupils to be able to express and explain their understanding and misunderstandings. This is vital for every subject and for learning in life.

INDEPENDENCE:

We recognise that communication is fundamental to maximising our pupils' independence
For example by;
- Seeking Attention and developing 2 way communication
- Having needs met - sad/happy, hungry, thirsty and requesting
- Shared attention
- Asking - Sharing wants, needs and desires
- Making choices
- Functional Language

COMMUNICATION:

To take turns, ask for help, give a reason for their answer or to communicate a preference. Communication is key and forms an integral part of our curriculum provision.

ENGAGEMENT:

If lessons are tailored for each individual student, supporting their interests, then they should have a high level of engagement for learning and it should encourage pupils to want to communicate more

Communication and interaction is taught throughout the day at John Watson School. We provide multiple opportunities to reinforce functional language. Our learners have a range of ability across the age range, and so the way we approach Communication teaching reflects this fact. We understand that pupils in John Watson School develop at different rates and age appropriateness and pupil interests needs to be considered at every stage.

JWS Communication and Interaction Stages and Strategies

Intent - Pre-Intentional Communication Stage (P Level 1-P Level 2)
Pupils at this stage rely on adults to interpret their behaviours and actions as communication e.g. they may show reflex responses, reach out for things and begin to listen to their own vocalisations along with the use of eye contact and facial expressions this is then developed into a shared turn taking experience.

Listening/Receptive Communication Implementation Strategies

Objects of Reference
Objects of Reference help pupils to anticipate and predict what is happening. Real objects are concrete and easier to understand than photographs or symbols.   Pupils should be encouraged to experience the objects using all of their senses (e.g. by helping pupils to touch, look at, listen to and taste objects). Objects of Reference also provide pupils with sensory links into the communicative world.

- Use objects consistently to help pupils understand and anticipate what is happening e.g. always show them their bowl when it is time for eating etc.
- Give pupils opportunities and time to respond to a cue and to make choices from objects (e.g. by reaching and eye pointing). Take up time is vital at this stage and waiting for a reaction is very important
- Objects of Reference should be used around the classroom and as part of timetables to prompt pupils about where they are and what is happening next.

Other Strategies
- Talk to pupils using minimal language - single words (e.g. 'Cup', 'ball'.)
- Support pupils understanding by using real objects, gestures and signs.
- Reinforce what you say to pupils by using your facial expressions and tone of voice.
- Use singing and repetition to provide pupils with experience of language, tone and rhythm of speech

Speaking/ Expressive CommunicationImplementation Strategies

AAC- Additional Augmentative Communication
AAC can be used to develop an understanding of cause and effect at this stage. This is the basis of pre intentional communication.

- Use switch toys – Use toys which give different types of sensory feedback (e.g. lights, movement, noise etc). Identify their likes/dislikes.

Vocalisation and speech sounds
Intensive Interaction (Including Tac Pac and Music)
Intensive interaction involves pupils in 1:1 sessions where an adult follows their lead. By getting down to the pupils level and following their lead, the adult is able to have a conversation with pupils at their level. This helps to develop pupils understanding that what they do and can have an effect on another person.

- Have a range of sensory activities/objects for pupils to choose (e.g. soundboard, lights, texture and noise toys). Have two of each item so that you are able to copy and model back.
- Follow the pupil's lead. Imitate and model back their actions, vocalisations, movements, etc. (Observe, Wait, Listen - OWL).
- If the pupil models the same action, vocalisation or movement back to you, repeat it again.
- When the pupil accepts this and realises that you are copying them, add something new. Give the pupil time to respond to this e.g, if the pupil is tapping their leg, you could start by tapping your own leg and then move on to tapping their leg or clapping your hands.

- Give the pupil lots of time and space to initiate interactions and to respond to your actions.
- Tac-Pac – This is a communication through music and sensory stimulus programme. (Please see a member of the senior management team or the Communication Lead for more info)
- Music Communication Groups, run by a qualified music teacher in a small group.

Play and Interaction

This is essential in developing interactions and provides pupils with reasons for communicating.

- Give pupils a turn/chance to communicate.
- Encourage pupils to explore objects around them and the toys you give them, hand-over-hand/under hand if required.

Resources and Environment

Communication Passports

Pupils at this level need adults to interpret their behaviours. People who do not know pupils well will not always understand what they are trying to communicate. For pupils to learn, that what they do is communicative, they need all adults, in all situations to respond consistently to their actions, vocalisations, behaviours and non-verbal communication. The more adults respond consistently to what pupils do, the easier it is for them to learn that their actions have an effect on adults around them. Adults need to interpret pupils behaviours as having communicative meanings e.g. greeting, requests.

- Make pupils a communication passport which includes information about how they communicate, their likes and dislikes and people they know. Make sure this goes everywhere with pupils, so that all adults who work with them can read it. This will help everyone to be consistent in how they interact with them and help them to develop their communication further.

SCERTS Approach

Environment

- Clearly label equipment, classroom areas and toys, using objects of reference. This will support pupils to understand instructions and to make choices.
- Give pupils opportunities to request 'more/help' by not anticipating their needs and giving them plenty of time to ask for you.

Intent - Intentional Communication P Level 3

Pupils at this stage are able to communicate intentionally, but do not yet have a formal method of communication. They are likely to communicate using gestures, facial expression, body movements and vocalisations along with turn taking and imitation.

Listening/Receptive Communication Implementation Strategies

Objects of Reference – Extend to Photographs

- Use previous strategies and start to introduce photographs alongside objects of reference in order to prepare them for what is happening next and to give them choices. (See advice from Pre Intentional Communication Strategies P1-P2)

Other strategies

- Continue to use strategies from Pre Intentional Communication Strategies P1-P2
- Talk to pupils using 1-2 word phrases, e.g. 'want drink.'
- Give pupils time to respond.

Speaking/ Expressive Communication Implementation Strategies

AAC- Additional Augmentative Communication
- Give pupils opportunities to take part in social activities (e.g. greetings, songs, etc.) using basic switches e.g. BIGMacks).
- Pupils may benefit from using a talking photo album. Photos of important people, places and objects provide pupils with prompts and help them to make choices and take part in social interaction.

Vocalisation and speech sounds
- Copy and repeat vocalisations and speech modelling language
- Sing repetitive songs
- Read repetitive stories
- Model naming things/people

Other strategies
- Comment on things pupils are showing interest in.
- Model language for them, do not continually ask questions.
- Continue to support language with gestures, facial expressions and sign

Play and Interaction
- Follow pupils lead.
- Involve pupils in social and turn taking games (e.g. peek-a-boo, ready steady go, etc.).
- Help pupils to explore objects using all of their senses.
- Model basic imaginative play (e.g. feeding teddy, hugging dolly etc).
- Give pupils simple choices and turn taking opportunities.

Resources and Environment

Communication Passports
- Pupils still rely on adults to interpret their communications, so communication passports are still relevant and important. (See advice from P1-P2)

SCERTS Approach

Environment
- Don't always anticipate pupils' needs. This will encourage them to ask you.
- Clearly label equipment, classroom areas and toys, using photos. This will support pupils to understand instructions and to make choices.
- Use photo visual timetables to help pupils to anticipate what is going to happen next.

Intent - Intentional Formal Communication (P Level 4)

Pupils at this stage will mostly be able to communicate using more formal methods (e.g. words, signs, symbols). Pupils will be able to understand and use a range of single words along with non-verbal communication.

Individuals will develop different methods of communicating depending on physical abilities, personalities and their developmental stage. Below are a range of strategies, which can be tried out. Identify which ones work best for the individual.

Listening/Receptive Communication Implementation Strategies

Symbols and AAC
- Continue to use strategies from Intentional communication
- Start to introduce pupils to symbols alongside photographs in order to prompt them about what is

- happening next and to give them choices.
- Always model the spoken words and signs to go with all symbols.

Other Strategies
- Support pupils understanding visually (e.g. using objects, photos, symbols, etc.).
- Talk/sign to pupils using 1-2 word phrases (e.g. 'want drink', 'you want drink').
- Observe Wait and Listen (OWL) to allow pupils time to respond

Speaking/ Expressive Communication Implementation Strategies

Symbols
- Symbols should be used with pupils who have difficulties signing or using spoken words.
- Symbols can be used to prompt pupils about what is happening next and to enable pupils to make choices.
- Help pupils to start to discriminate between symbols by offering them choices between two (e.g. 'banana or raisins?').
- Different types of symbols will be appropriate for different pupils (e.g. if a pupil has a visual impairment, black and white symbols are easier for them to see).

AAC- Additional Augmentative Communication
- Pupils may continue to benefit from using single button devices like BigMACKS
- Extend pupils use of these devices to choice making in a range of situations.

Speaking and Signing
- When pupils say a word, add to it by saying 2 words. (e.g. if they say "biscuit" you could say "more biscuit" or "chocolate biscuit").
- Give pupils time to respond. (OWL - Observe, Wait, Listen)
- Create situations where pupils need to speak/vocalise

Other strategies
- Do NOT worry about please and thank you at this point - this is not functional language
- Do NOT continually ask pupils questions – they learn from you modelling language for them, so provide a commentary on what they are doing.
- DO comment on things they are showing interest in.

Play and Interaction
- Give pupils lots of choices and opportunities to turn take.
- Model basic imaginative play (e.g. feeding teddy, hugging dolly).
- Involve pupils in vocal and Oro-motor play (e.g. copying and extending babbling sounds, blowing out the candles and blowing bubbles, etc.).

Resources and Environment

Environment
- Don't always anticipate pupils' needs. Encourage them to ask you.
- Clearly label equipment, classroom areas and toys, using symbols. This will support pupils to understand instructions and to make choices.

SCERTS Approach

PECS (Picture Exchange Communication System) and SCERTS
This approach is used to support pupils with 'social' communication problems who do not enjoy

communication, e.g. pupils on the autistic spectrum. These pupils do not communicate functionally, they avoid interaction and do not respond well to social rewards i.e. they do not enjoy communicating.

PECS involves teaching pupils to initiate an interaction by approaching another person and giving them a picture of something they want, in exchange for the actual item. This helps pupils to develop their understanding that communication is a two-way process.

- Pupils at this stage will be developing their ability to hand over a single symbol for a motivating object. They may initially require adult support for this.
- See the Speech and Language Therapist or a member of staff who is trained in PECS for more support.

Intent - 2-3+ Word Level Communication - Pre KS Standards

Pupils at this stage are beginning to put words/signs/symbols into short 2-3 word sentences. They are able to understand short instructions (2-3 key words) and are developing their understanding of basic concepts (e.g. big/little, in/on/under)

Listening/Receptive Communication Strategies

- When you talk to pupils keep instructions short & simple. Don't overload them with instructions i.e. don't ask them to do several things at one time.
- Use signing or show pupils symbols when you talk to them to make what you have said clearer. Teachers should employ this strategy when teaching in general.
- Give the Pupil opportunities to carry out 2-3 key word instructions (e.g. 'give me the big book,' give me the big red book,' 'bring the spoon and cup').

Speaking/ Expressive Communication Implementation Strategies

AAC devices

Pupils who have physical difficulties which make it difficult for them to access talking, signing or symbols, may benefit from a communication device. These devices work best for pupils who have a good level of understanding, but cannot communicate their wants and needs.

- Adults need to ensure that the AAC device is available and used at all times.
- These vary and can have any number of options for the pupil to use. The number of things on the device will depend on the individual.

Speaking and Signing

- When pupils say something, which is not quite right, don't correct them but instead model the sentence back to them in its correct grammatical form.
- If pupils mispronounce a word or doesn't get a sign quite right, don't correct them but model the right pronunciation/sign for them to learn.
- Give pupils lots of opportunities to talk about the "here & now". When encouraging pupils to talk about something, try to use open questions e.g. "what are you doing?" rather than closed questions e.g. "are you drawing a house?"

Play and Interaction

- Encourage pupils to interact with their peers as well as adults.
- Involve pupils in imaginary play (e.g. with dollies, teddies in the home corner etc).
- Copy pupils play and add something else for them to learn (e.g. if the pupil gives teddy a drink, model back stirring the drink and then giving it to teddy).

Resources and Environment

Environment

Clearly label equipment, classroom areas and toys, using symbols. This will support pupils to understand instructions and to make choices.

SCERTS Approach

Communication books

- When pupils are able to consistently discriminate between symbols, they can be organised into a book. This should go everywhere with the pupil and be used at all times.
- Adults should make sure the book is always available and is updated so it can be used throughout the day for **every communication.**
- Important pages might include: snack time, choosing time, friends and adults and personal care.

PECS folders and SCERTS

When pupils are able to initiate a range of requests using PECS symbols, the symbols can be organised into a folder.

- Pupils will begin to discriminate between a wider range of symbols, make a wider range of requests and may start to put symbol sentences together, starting with 'I want…'
- Adults should make sure the book is always available and is updated so it can be used throughout the day for **every interaction.**
- Important pages might include: snack time, choosing time, friends and adults and personal care.
- Pupils should be able to travel a distance to give an adult their symbol and be persistent in their initiations.
- See the Speech and Language Therapist or a member of staff who is trained in PECS for more support.

Intent - Higher Level Communication Pre KS Standards and beyond
Pupils at this stage are able to understand language in a range of situations and are developing more abstract understanding of language. They are able to initiate and maintain conversations and talk about things outside of the 'here and now.'

Listening/Receptive Communication Implementation Strategies

- When you talk to pupils keep instructions short & simple. Don't overload the pupil with instructions i.e. don't ask them to do several things at one time (use minimal language).
- Use signing or show the pupil symbols when you talk to them to make what you have said clearer.
- Incorporate visual support into **ALL teaching and communicative situations.**

Speaking/ Expressive Communication Implementation Strategies

Symbols and AAC devices

- Pupils will be able to use more complex communication books and AAC devices to build longer sentences in a wider range of situations.
- AAC devices may now have a range of buttons and levels allowing the pupil to be more creative in their communication.
- Adults should ensure that symbols are appropriate for each individual pupil, their learning level and the curriculum theme.

Speaking and Signing
- At this stage, start to model 'please' and 'thank you' for pupils to learn.
- When a pupil says something, which is not quite right don't correct the pupil but instead model the sentence back to the pupil in its correct grammatical form.
- Give pupils lots of opportunities to talk about the "here & now" as well as the past future & hypothetical events e.g. "what would happen if…." When encouraging pupils to talk about something try to use open questions e.g. "what did you do?" rather than closed questions e.g. "did you go to the shops?"
- When pupils say something that is not relevant to the conversation you are having, focus them back onto the topic.

Speech Sound Production
- If the pupil mispronounces a word don't correct them but model the right pronunciation for them to learn.
- Speech production can be supported by adults modelling CUED articulation to give the pupil an extra cue to the correct pronunciation.
- Pupils at this stage may benefit from regular practice of specific speech sounds.
- Help pupils to develop strategies to use to help others to understand them if their speech is not clear (e.g. slowing down, repeating, using a sign, finger spelling, etc.)
- It is important to always use the chosen sound production strategy with **EVERY communication and interaction** with the individual.

Play and Interaction
- Encourage pupils to interact with their peers as well as adults.
- Encourage pupils to use appropriate social skills when you talk to them e.g. to make eye contact etc
- Encourage pupils to talk about their feelings both positive & negative.

Resources and Environment

Environment
- Continue to clearly label equipment, classroom areas and toys, using symbols. This will support pupils to understand instructions and to make choices.
- If a pupil has an AAC device, communication book or PECS folder, it is **vital** that this is constantly available, up-to-date and used throughout the school day for **EVERY communication.**

PECS and SCERTS
- Pupils may be using longer sentences (e.g. 'I want more orange juice please').
- Pupils may also be developing a range of different sentences (e.g. 'I see', 'I hear' 'I feel').